

Message Text

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PAGE 01 NEW DE 06110 071419Z

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ACTION NEA-16

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 SS-20 RSC-01 DRC-01 NEAE-00 PM-00

(ISO) W

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O R 071340Z MAY 74

FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1328

INFO AMEMBASSY PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L NEW DELHI 6110

PARIS FOR AMBASSADOR MOYNIHAN FROM SCHNEIDER

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV IN

SUBJECT: PARLIAMENTARY DEBATE--BIRDS--

FOR LAINGEN FROM SCHNEIDER

1. IF IT'S NOT ONE THING IT'S ANOTHER. DURING THE DEBATE IN PARLIAMENT TODAY ON POLICE DISCOVERY OF TWO MYSTERIOUS RADIO TRANSMITTERS/RECEIVERS IN MEGHALAYA, A JANA SANGH MEMBER ASKED HOW IT HAPPENED THAT THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA HAD AGREED TO PERMIT US MILITARY IN COOPERATION WITH THE BOMBAY NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY TO CONDUCT A STUDY OF MIGRATORY BIRDS USING RADAR AND CONCERNING BIRDS COMING FROM THE SITE OF CHINESE NUCLEAR TESTS.

2. THE JANA SANGH MP ASKED WHAT INTEREST THE US MILITARY HAD IN WATCHING MIGRATORY BIRDS UNLESS IT WAS FOR ESPIONAGE PURPOSES. MINISTER OF STATE FOR HOME AFFAIRS MIRDHA, WHO WAS TRYING HIS BEST TO COPE WITH QUESTIONS ON THE RADIO SETS, PLEADED IGNORANCE ABOUT THE MIGRATORY BIRD STUDY BUT HALF COMMITTED HIMSELF TO COME BACK WITH A STATEMENT.

3. WE HAVE FRAGMENTARY RECORDS HERE WHICH INDICATE THAT THE ARMY RESEARCH OFFICE IN FRANKFURT REACHED AN AGREEMENT WITH THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA (MINISTRY OF DEFENSE) IN 1967 UNDER WHICH IT PROVIDED A GRANT ABOUT \$5,000 A YEAR FOR THREE YEARS TO SALIM
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ALI OF THE BOMBAY NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY TO STUDY THE MIGRATORY

MOVEMENTS OF BIRDS AND THEIR POSSIBLE ROLE AS CARRIERS OF ANTHROPOD-BORN VIRUSES. OUR FILES SAY THIS WAS PART OF A WORLD-WIDE ARMY MIGRATORY ANIMAL PATHOLOGICAL SURVEY (MAPS).

4. OUR RECORDS SAY NOTHING ABOUT RADAR AND WE PRESUME THIS IS WILD IMAGINATION. CAN YOU CONFIRM? ARE THE REST OF OUR FACTS RIGHT? WHAT CONVINCING REASON CAN WE GIVE FOR THE ARMY'S STUDYING SUCH THINGS WHICH WOULD NOT LEAD TO INCREASED SUSPICIONS?

5. INCIDENTALLY, CONCURRENT WITH THE ARMY PROJECT WAS A SIMILAR ONE BETWEEN SMITHSONIAN AND SALIM ALI ON MIGRATORY BIRDS.

6. WE WOULD APPRECIATE ANY ENLIGHTENMENT YOU CAN PROVIDE US ON THIS PROJECT AS WE MAY GET QUESTIONS BOTH FROM THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA AND THE PRESS TOMORROW. ACTUALLY IT IS THE GOI'S PROBLEM AS THEY AGREED TO THE PROJECT BUT I WOULD LIKE TO BE FULLY INFORMED ABOUT THIS.DAO IS ALSO QUERYING WES SCHULL IN DIA. COULD WE HAVE YOUR REPLY BY OPENING OF BUSINESS MAY 8. SCHNEIDER

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: ESPIONAGE, CENTRAL LEGISLATURE, MILITARY AGREEMENTS, RADAR EQUIPMENT
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 07 MAY 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: GarlanWA
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974NEWDE06110
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740134-0191
From: NEW DELHI
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19740568/aaaacjac.tel
Line Count: 79
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: GarlanWA
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 12 APR 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <12 APR 2002 by garlanwa>; APPROVED <04 FEB 2003 by GarlanWA>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: PARLIAMENTARY DEBATE--BIRDS-- FOR LAINGEN FROM SCHNEIDER
TAGS: PGOV, IN, SMI
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005